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Hello my name is Chennal Chase. Thank you for hearing my testimony today.

I am a mother of a step son with a disability and I work 2 jobs in not-for-profit agencies as a direct care worker. In these jobs I give care to men, women and children with intellectual & developmental disabilities.

I am here to ask for your support for Senate Bill 918.

Here is why:

- Families can't wait for years on a waiting list for services they need today.
- As a state, we need a plan on how to care for people with intellectual disabilities, this bill makes that possible.
- Any plan going forward to meet families' needs, should NOT be made by taking away from the wages and benefits of current care givers.
- Any plan by DDS going forward shouldn't be made by cutting the services to people receiving current DDS funded services.

I know what it means as a family member who doesn't receive enough support to provide for my own child. My step son was disabled from a car accident on Avon Mountain June 21st 2009.

Thaddious's life and ours changed as we knew it on that day. He became a person needing total care. He was on the waiting list for the traumatic brain waiver until late 2010 when he was accepted. The brain waiver program has been such a great help for my family and the ladies who care for him are a blessing. It only took a year to get the support we need. That program worked.

We need the DDS waiting list to work. Waiting for both parents to die before their child receives the necessary placement is not an option. Each and every day as a care giver at my 2 jobs I see families just like mine, struggling to provide care for their loved ones with developmental disabilities.

I have a passion for the care I do each and every day at work, but this bill also calls for assessing just what our state needs to provide good services to individuals with intellectual disabilities. I am asking you to not undermine the current system of care just to provide more services.

I work 60 – 70 hours every week, at 3 different jobs, to make sure I can care for my step son. It has been hard in the last 7 years of zero funding at my 3 jobs. Some have even had cuts. We have already cut too much.

At my job service hours have been cut, group homes have been closed, benefits have been given up by workers, and the start wages have been lowered below a living wage. None of this helps the already strapped system of care which families are desperate to have access too.

Senate Bill 918 can give us a road map that doesn't drive one another off the road to get to the finish line. It gives us all a seat at the table. Thanks for listening.